

Hussein of Jordan visited Ottawa in November; and Libya's Secretary of Agriculture Reclamation and Land Development, Bashir Judah, visited Alberta in August.

Francophone Africa

Canada continued to implement in 1981 its over-all policy of expanding and strengthening its links with the countries of Francophone Africa. A new impetus was given to the political dialogue with African governments through an increased number of high level visits. A wide range of development assistance programs and commercial relations, together with a renewed interest in cultural and sports exchanges, contributed to the intensification of Canada's relations with the countries in this area.

The Prime Minister visited Senegal, Algeria and Morocco, while several Cabinet ministers covered almost half of the countries in Francophone Africa, namely Benin, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Gabon, Guinea, Upper Volta, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Burundi and Zaïre. Canada, for its part, received the foreign ministers of Ivory Coast, Morocco and Togo, and various ministers from Algeria, Guinea, Upper Volta, Niger, Rwanda, Comoros, Senegal, Tunisia and the Central African Republic.

These visits provided occasions to pursue in-depth consultations on political matters of bilateral or general interest and to further different trade or developmental projects. Some of the visits coincided with meetings of bilateral commissions which reviewed the whole realm of Canada's relations with the countries involved. Such bilateral meetings were held with Algeria, Senegal, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zaïre.

On the economic front, 1981 was another year of relative stagnation for most Francophone African countries, with the exception of oil-exporters such as Algeria, Tunisia, Cameroun and Gabon. Structural economic problems, combined with low international prices for tropical agricultural products and mineral staples such as copper and phosphates, led to insufficient rates of growth. The need for economic assistance became particularly acute in the less developed countries, which held various donor conferences to publicize their plight.

Several major disputes remained unsolved. Despite their agreement to hold an Organization of African Unity-inspired (OAU) referendum in Western Sahara, the parties were unable to determine its modalities and the territory remained a theatre of hostilities. After the Libyan withdrawal from Chad, the OAU succeeded in sending a pan-African peacekeeping force to the area, which did dampen somewhat the civil war but did not achieve a lasting political settlement between the parties. Senegal supported militarily the Gambian government, threatened by a coup d'état, and both countries agreed to create a Senegambian Confederation, within which both states would retain their sovereignty while collaborating closely in economic, defence and foreign policies. A bloodless coup d'état brought a change of government in the Central African Republic.